

Against the Grain

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Publisher Profile -- University of California Press

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poised to launch initiatives that are a real break with a traditional university press approach, while keeping us grounded in research, education, and the commitment to ground-breaking scholarship for which **UC Press** is known. It may seem a truism, but there's generally a need for slightly less repetitive talk and more doing amongst traditional and university press publishers. Strategy is great but you need products and customers to learn. Ultimately, our actions and the reception of our digital initiatives will set us apart from other publishers.

ATG: *That sounds intriguing. In what ways will your initiatives break with the traditional university press approach?*

NBC: I can't go into detail at this stage, but the way I see it, as we develop new products we should think more of ourselves as a 100-people start-up with existing annual revenues of +\$22m, affiliated with one of the world's greatest knowledge networks, situated down the road from Silicon Valley, and in search of networked business models that advance science and education. There are start-ups with worse odds that achieve great things, and there are larger publishers that are stuck in their own mud.

ATG: *Your background is very much from the perspective of a commercial publisher. How do you think the digital expertise and perspective you have gained can be utilized in the university press environment?*

NBC: It helps if you have a good understanding of your commercial competitors and which buttons to push as you set out to change how publishing facilitates the academy in its mission. Our role is not to replicate commercial publishers, but rather to differentiate and serve the academy better. We will use digital technologies and partnerships to scale efficiencies and act in an agile framework. Technologies and processing power that would have been prohibitively expensive for a non-profit organization such as ours are now well within reach. The beauty of new digital technologies is that you are possibly better positioned to take timely advantage of them if you are not a large commercial publisher. We are lighter and can cover greater distances in shorter time, in some instances possibly in collaboration with local Silicon Valley partners.

ATG: *In an interview with Alison Mudditt in the December 2011 issue of Against the Grain, she discussed two potential pilot "born digital" products. What initiatives is UC Press working on that you can tell us about now?*

NBC: We are working on a broad-scale OA initiative. Though many have dabbled with smaller scale initiatives, to this point, university presses haven't jumped into the deep end with OA. UC Press is exceptionally well placed to play a leading role in OA with

against the grain

publisher profile

University of California Press

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OFFICERS: UC Press functions as a unit of the Office of the President, University of California. UC Press' Director is Alison Mudditt.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS: AAUP, AAP, ALPSP.

UC PRESS AT A GLANCE:

UC Press publishes book, journal, and digital content from an international author pool working both within and outside the academy.

Nonprofit publishing arm of the University of California system.

25% of UCP authors are affiliated with the University of California.

Publishes on average 200 new books and 33 multi-issue journals in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

Maintains approximately 4,000 book titles in print.

CORE MARKETS/CLIENTELE: Faculty, students, and the librarians who serve them.

Readers interested in thoughtful debate about the vital social, cultural, political, and scientific issues of our times.

Policy makers, educators, and others who champion scholarly contributions to contemporary debates.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 100

NUMBER OF BOOKS PUBLISHED ANNUALLY: 200

NUMBER OF JOURNALS PUBLISHED ANNUALLY: 33 multi-issue journals

TOTAL NUMBER OF BOOKS ON YOUR BACKLIST: approximately 4,000

TOTAL NUMBER OF JOURNALS CURRENTLY PUBLISHED: 33

HISTORY AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR COMPANY/PUBLISHING PROGRAM:

University of California Press is one of the most forward-thinking scholarly publishers in the nation. For more than 100 years, it has championed work that influences public discourse and challenges the status quo in multiple fields of study. At a time of dramatic change for publishing and scholarship, we collaborate with scholars, librarians, authors, and students to stay ahead of today's knowledge demands and shape the future of publishing.

OUR MISSION: To drive progressive change by seeking out and fostering the brightest minds and giving them voice and reach. 🌱

the model we have in mind, and the model is unlike anything available. The first stage will look at OA articles, and the second stage will look at OA books. Other areas we're exploring include location sensitive workflow apps to better integrate learning resources in the classroom setting. These projects are in their formative stages, so I can't tell you more about them now, but they align in their potential to scale, and in this you will find our digital focus.

ATG: *Can you talk a little more about the model you have in mind? How will your OA initiative make economic sense for UC Press?*

What models will you use to ensure enough of an income stream to support your open access efforts for journal publications? And what about books and eBooks?

NBC: Unfortunately, we're simply not yet ready to discuss in detail at this stage. You know, publishers argue endlessly over OA, but the only voices that really matter in the end are the choices of our customers. Our role is not to produce models that work for other publishers. Our role is to create models that work particularly well for our customers in the academy and for the press. 🌱